(a) whether it is a fact that until recently prices of 435 items were taken into consideration by Government for evaluation of Wholesale Price Index in the country;

(b) if not, the actual details thereof;

(c) whether a proposal to increase the specified number of the above items is under consideration; and

(d) if so, the number of items, prices of which would be included as per the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) The number of items included in the current Wholesale Price Index Series with base year 1993-94 is 435.

(b) to (d) A Working Group under the Chairmanship of Professor Abhijit Sen, Member, Planning Commission has been constituted to advise the Government on various technical issues relating to the change of the base year from the existing base year of 1993-94. The Working Group is currently engaged in deliberating the modalities for collection of weekly prices required for construction of the revised series of the WPI. The commodity basket of the current series of the WPI would be restructured based on the recommendations of the Working Group.

Growth rate of Wholesale Price Index

†2612. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as on 17th June, 2006 the growth rate of Wholesale Price Index in the country was 5.44 per cent whereas it had come down to 4.84 percent on 24th June, 2006;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that during both the periods there was an increase in the prices of the commodities of primary sector, despite reduction in the general rate; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for price hike in the commodities of the primary sector?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. The details are indicated in the table below:

Point-to-Point WPI-inflation rate

(%)(June 17 2006 and June 24, 2006)

Week ended on	All commo-dities	Primary articles	Fuel, power, light & lubricants	Manufactured products
June 17,2006 June	5.44	7.66	9.94	2.87
24,2006	4.84	7.08	7.90	2.75

In the recent weeks of current year, there has been pressure on prices of some food grains and of petrol and diesel. Increase in prices of food articles has largely been due to a shortfall in domestic supplies relative to demand and hardening of international prices.

Unfair means to collect debt by bank

2613. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRA SEKHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been recent reports that some people have been driven to suicide by the debt collection activities of a certain bank that was an erstwhile development bank created by Government;

(b) whether it is a fact that *goondas* and criminals elements were/are used by this bank for such collection activities;

(c) what steps/action Government have taken against such banks especially when Government are common man oriented; and

(d) the authorities responsible for regulating Banks *vis-a-vis* their conduct towards borrowers, since activities of these banks seem to either inadvertently or deliberately resulting in nexus with criminal elements; and

(e) whether there is any legislation to protect borrowers from action of lenders like this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has come to know of two media reports alleging that the borrowers committed suicide due to the alleged harassment and humiliation by